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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, Your glory endures through the seasons and Your divine majesty sustains us. Lead our lawmakers to a faithfulness that fulfills Your purposes. Lord, keep them steadfast in the faith that You are at work in our world, guiding their steps and preparing them for victory. Use our Senators to create laws that will extend Your kingdom in the hearts of the people of this land we love. Guide the deliberations, debates, and decisions of this day.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will pro-

ceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Robert Luis Santos, of Texas, to be Director of the Census for a term expiring December 31, 2026. (Reappointment)

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, we are now 4 weeks into the fiscal year. The Federal Government—the most powerful nation on Earth—is running on autopilot, and we only have 4 weeks until the government shuts down unless Congress takes action.

And it is not a theoretical exercise. The actions we take, or don't take, in this Chamber with respect to the fiscal year 2022 appropriations bills affect people's lives and also the direction of this Nation.

These bills provide for our national defense, help educate our Nation's children, provide medical care for our veterans, ensure that we have clean air and water, invest in science, and provide a social safety net for our Nation's most vulnerable populations.

Now, we can, and we should, do our job and finish these bills in the coming weeks, and we should be ready to go. I mean, 2 weeks ago, I made public nine Senate appropriations bills. When you combine this with the three bills the Senate Appropriations Committee marked up way back in August, all 12 bills have been released. The House has marked up all of their bills, and all but three of them have already passed the House.

But in order to finish our work, we need to have an agreed-upon top line that has been worked out in a bipartisan and bicameral basis—something that has been done so many times in the past. We can't finalize bills until we know how much we are able to spend. And I have been calling for these negotiations for months. But we need all the party to come to the table. It takes both Republicans and Democrats to strike a deal.

Now, Democrats have already made a fair offer. My Republican colleagues made clear to us that they believed the President's proposal for a 1.7-percent increase for defense programs was inadequate. I thought it struck the right balance, as did many of my colleagues.

But this institution is built on compromise. So in the Senate posted bill, I included a 5-percent increase for defense instead of the 1.7 percent the administration had proposed. The 5-percent increase is based on the funding level included in the National Defense Authorization Act, NDAA.

Now, the Senate Armed Services Committee voted on that. Do you know what the vote was?—25 to 1, in favor of that 5-percent increase. Every single Senate Republican on the Committee supported this level of funding. The House bill contains the same 5-percent increase, and it passed the House Chamber, 316 to 113.

In order to increase the defense number and stay within the top line established in the FY 2022 budget resolution, I reduced the amount for nondefense programs from President Biden's proposed 16-percent increase, which I would have preferred—but I reduced it to a 13-percent increase. That is how negotiations work. Each side has to give something.

Now, having offered the Republican-endorsed spending level for defense, have they taken yes for an answer?

No.

Have they taken time for a counteroffer?

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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